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TAGS: OPRC KMDR KPAO TW

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS, U.S.
ARMS SALES

¶1. Summary: The Taipei dailies July 29 focused their coverage on cross-Straits relations, local politics, and President Chen Shui-bian's declaration on Taiwan's determination to safeguard the nation's territory (made on a visit to Pratas Island). The major Chinese-language newspapers' reports on cross-Straits relations centered mainly on two aspects: Beijing's unilateral announcement regarding duty-free entry of Taiwan fruit starting August 1; and Taiwan Mainland Affairs Council's plan to open Taiwan to Chinese tourists. The centrist "China Times" ran a banner headline on its front page that read: "Both sides [of the Taiwan Strait] exchange blows; tourism versus fruit." The pro-unification "United Daily News" said on its front page: "Breakthroughs have been made with regard to opening mainland Chinese to visit Taiwan"; the front-page news story of the pro-independence "Taiwan Daily," however, read: "Taiwan fruit selling to China and [mainland Chinese] to tour Taiwan; China is playing a two-pronged strategy." The pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan's biggest daily, carried the news stories on these cross-Straits topics on its page two. It also devoted its entire page three to coverage of the unnamed disease in Sichuan that has already killed 31 people.

¶2. In terms of editorials, a "United Daily News" editorial commented on President Chen's remarks on cross-Straits policy, which he made during a recent videoconference with the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan. The editorial cautioned Chen not to copy Washington's 'China threat theory' or Beijing's cross-Straits policy, but should work out a set of policies that truly meets Taiwan's interests. A "Taiwan Daily" editorial urged the opposition parties to support the holding of a Legislative Yuan interim session to discuss the arms procurement bill. Taiwan needs to protect its own national security, the editorial said, otherwise how can it ask the United States to help defend the island? End summary.

¶1. Cross-Straits Relations

"No War, Find Ways to Talk, and No More Procrastination!"

The pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 600,000] editorialized (7/29):

"President Chen Shui-bian said during a videoconference with the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan that his cross-Straits policy is 'to find ways to talk [with Beijing], and that he is not afraid of postponing [the talks]. .'

"Taiwan must not have any illusion about the United States' 'China threat theory,' because it is unlikely that Washington will apply the tactics it used against Iraq on China. Neither should Taiwan follow China's suit. because the future trend tells [us] that no matter how long Taiwan procrastinates, it is unlikely to procrastinate long enough to see 'China fall apart' or to see 'Taiwan declare independent and become a nation.' If so, what is the point for Chen to procrastinate? .

"The painful experience that Taiwan has undergone over the past ten years has proved that Taiwan should not and must not procrastinate any more. The longer it procrastinates, the worse the situation gets, and the narrower its road becomes. Chen must not copy the United States' 'China threat theory' and use it as his cross-Straits policy, nor should he copy [Chinese President] Hu Jintao's 'not afraid of procrastinating' as Taiwan's cross-Straits policy. Taiwan is not the United States, after all, and Chen is not Hu, either. Chen must not randomly pick up what others have said and take it as his own ideas. Instead, he must work out a cross-Straits policy that truly meets Taiwan's own interests!"

12. U.S. Arms Sales

"The Opposition Parties Must Uphold [Taiwan's] National Security as a Top Priority and Support Holding an Interim Session [in the Legislative Yuan] to Have the Procedure Committee Discuss the Arms Procurement Bill"

The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 150,000] commented in an editorial (7/29):

". But the problems and obstacles surrounding the U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, which have hindered the arms procurement bill from being passed [by the Legislative Yuan], has created a threat to Taiwan's security and have had an impact on the development of Taipei-Washington relations. The U.S. government and the Pentagon placed tremendous pressure on Taiwan demanding that the island pass the special budget for the arms deal in order to further strengthen its defense capabilities. When their attempts failed, however, they sought to view the crisis across the Taiwan Strait using a rational and composed attitude. Washington believes that Taiwan is a democratic and free country and it is up to its public to decide whether the arms procurement bill should be passed. If the Taiwan people do not want the bill to be passed and chose to risk danger, the United States can do nothing to change [the Taiwan people's decision] but accept the fact. There are voices in the United States saying if the Taiwan people do not want to safeguard their own national security, how can they ask the United States to volunteer to join a war in the Taiwan Strait, and such a view might develop into a mainstream value in American society. .

". [Taiwan's] opposition parties should modify their attitude of opposing everything that [President] Chen Shui-bian supports and adjust their mistaken idea of 'joining hands with the Chinese Communist Party to restrain Taiwan.' They instead should adopt a position of protecting Taiwan, uphold the island's national security as their top priority, and support the holding of an interim session [in the Legislative Yuan] to have the Procedure Committee conduct a substantive debate on the arms procurement bill as early as possible. That way can best demonstrate the position claimed to be held by the opposition parties that they love Taiwan and stand beside the Taiwan people."

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